

Division of Philosophy Module into four parts

In all cases, the intention is to encourage dialogue, by presenting original writing.

The course is addressed to a collective, with a view to raising common consciousness.

Documents are short enough and time is sufficient to have them read out aloud in the class, assuming that a proportion of students will struggle to read this material.

Part 1

Philosophers: Great Men?

Philosophy, Tool of Synthesis

Philosophy Q and A

Dialectical and Not Dialectical

In this part, philosophy is shown as a development that has been contributed to by many authors from the origin of writing up to the present time. It is shown as having a history, and therefore, as having a future life. History has not ended. Philosophy must, and does, continue to develop, while accumulating and absorbing what has gone before:

“Most commonly the refutation is taken in a purely negative sense to mean that the system refuted has ceased to count for anything, has been set aside and done for. Were it so, the history of philosophy would be, of all studies, most saddening, displaying, as it does, the refutation of every system which time has brought forth. Now although it may be admitted that every philosophy has been refuted, it must be in an equal degree maintained that no philosophy has been refuted. And that in two ways. For first, every philosophy that deserves the name always embodies the Idea: and secondly, every system represents one particular factor or particular stage in the evolution of the Idea. The refutation of a philosophy, therefore, only means that its barriers are crossed, and its special principle reduced to a factor in the completer principle that follows.”

(GWF Hegel, in “Shorter Logic”)

The second booklet introduces a selection of mid-length quotations together with a statement of intentionality. Philosophy identifies the good that contains all other goods: freedom. Therefore, philosophy creates a basis for morality. Philosophy confirms that the prime concern of humanity-in-the-universe is humanity. The Subject, individual and/or collective, is understood in its relation with the objective, material world.

Humanism is the kind of philosophy that holds that humanity, through labour, creates itself in a process of development. We reject those forms of philosophy that are not humanistic in this sense, but we do not oppose ourselves to religion.

The third booklet (Philosophy Q and A) is to be taken together with the sheet of graphic illustrations called “Dialectical and Not Dialectical”, as well as with the booklet on Spreadsheets that is part of the Induction module.

These will first be used to show how the definition of a Dichotomy (“Jointly Exhaustive, Mutually Exclusive”) can be used to create and to explain the analysis of a list in columns. This, most ubiquitous, type of analysis is understood intuitively, we presume. Here, we make it explicit and discover its basis in simple philosophy.

Then, we make the leap from understanding dichotomy to understanding dialectical contradiction, and the unity and struggle of opposites, with the aid of the graphic illustrations. A sharp distinction is made between dichotomy and dialectic, creating a basis for understanding the distinction between quantitative and qualitative change.

The “Q and A” is used to show that philosophy is not supposed to be dichotomised into mutually-exclusive categories (as e.g. Wikipedia does, into “Epistemology”, “Logic”, “Metaphysics” *et cetera*), but should be organic and general, just as politics is general. The ANC is a general-purpose organisation and it needs generalists. This is why, as ANC, we have to study philosophy.

Part 2

Tony Buzan, Use Your Head (Conspectus by D Tweedie)
Theses on Feuerbach; Philosophy of Right; The Hammer

The brief version of **Tony Buzan’s** thinking is given so that we can transact several matters, which are the following.

The greatest of them is to be able to visualise and conceive of dialectical reality as the ascent from the abstract to the concrete. Tony Buzan’s mind-maps succeed in doing this by representing a whole as an inter-relation of its parts, while the construction of the whole begins with the parts.

Additional, but not un-related to these is the ability to deal with books and to read fast. Buzan’s approach is consistent with the abstract/concrete relationship that he uses in his mind-maps.

Likewise, Buzan’s advice (his “organic study method”) effectively re-iterates the same logic, for the purpose now of synthesis of knowledge from sources.

Altogether these provide a real and practical (for the students themselves as much as for the world at large) demonstration of the usefulness of philosophy, as, among other things, a tool of dialectical analysis, of criticism, and of new creation.

The **Theses on Feuerbach** are used to establish that “it is men who change circumstances”, that “the standpoint of the new materialism is human society” and that the point of philosophy is to change the world.

The excerpt from the **Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right** is used to introduce religion and to show that for Marx at least, there is no problem with religion.

The quotation from **Spinoza** is an illustration of the practical dialectic of history. It shows how human beings create something out of nothing. Philosophy must, and can explain how it is possible for humans to do this as a normal, daily occurrence.

Part 3

Ngugi, The Writer in a Neo-colonial State, 1993, extract

Fanon, National Culture, Fight for Freedom, 1959; Conclusion, 1961

Cabral, The Weapon of Theory, 1966, excerpt

In this part we begin to justify and to raise the status of the intellectual, seen first in the guise of **Ngugi wa Thiong’o**’s “effective writer”, but making clear that the unavoidable burden of which Ngugi writes is the one that we must all carry. Members of political parties and leaders of democratic movements are also intellectuals and must bear the same kind of responsibilities as Ngugi’s generic revolutionary writers bear.

Frantz Fanon confirms nationalism and confirms humanism. Fanon also reconciles the African with the modern, and poses a mission for Africa in the history of the world.

Amilcar Cabral describes history and development in terms of the struggle of African liberation movements

Part 4

Marx, Engels, Communist Manifesto, (part), 1848

Marx, Capital V1, C6, Buying and Selling of Labour Power, 1867

These texts from **Marx** can complete the module in a way that is sufficiently organic.

In addition, they can serve to cover matters that were previously dealt in different parts of the ANC’s Regional Political Schools under the broad headings of philosophy, or tools of analysis.

The excerpt from the **Communist Manifesto** describes the broad sweep and development of human history in general terms, as a history of class struggle. It is rich enough for many discussions.

Chapter 6 from Marx's "**Capital**", **Volume 1**, is where Marx reveals the "secret of the self-increase of capital", surplus value, consequent upon the buying and selling of labour-power. This is what allows us to understand the nature and definition of the capitalist class, and of its dialectical counterpart, the proletariat.

The burning philosophical question of our time is: What will be the nature of the relations of production, when capitalism has been done away with, and the proletariat has consequently ceased to exist? In other words, what is the nature of the socialism that we are "building now"?

Not everything from the earlier ANC courses is covered here. Some things have been deliberately left out.

In particular, the "laws" of "quantity into quality" and "negation of the negation" are not touched here. Insofar as they would be dealt with in summary manner, they would appear as magic tricks, and would not describe the multiple series of specific transformations that give rise to these tags. To properly explain "quantity into quality" and "negation of the negation", a full exposition of Hegel's philosophy would be required. This is not possible in the time allowed.

Unity-and-struggle-of-opposites is not set up here as a "law", but it arises naturally in the discussion of dialectics, especially in part 2 above. In that way, it is well covered.

Both dialectics and materialism are fully covered, but no attempt is made to conflate these two, or to dichotomise materialism in opposition to "idealism". This matter is settled during the discussion of Marx's Theses on Feuerbach, in Part 2 above.

What can be found here is a practical explanation of historical development, presented in an African way but integrated with general and historical philosophy. This is what the ANC's mission requires.

"It is idle to do with more, what can be done with less."

(William of Occam: "Occam's Razor")
